



U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation

GENERAL COUNSEL

400 Seventh St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

71647

OST-99-6410-23

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
00 FEB -3 PM 12:46

February 2, 2000

Patty Hanshaw  
Owner /Manager  
Rx Travel Doctors  
923 Third Ave.  
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Ms. Hanshaw:

Your letter to Secretary Slater of January 25, 2000, has been referred to the General Counsel's Office. In your letter, you express support for the American Society of Travel Agents' formal complaint in Docket OST-99-6410 against various airlines. ASTA alleges that in cutting the commissions that they pay travel agents, the airlines are engaging in unfair practices and unfair methods of competition in violation of 49 U.S.C. §41712.

Under the Department's *ex parte* rules, 14 CFR Part 300, we cannot comment on the substance of your letter. We will, however, see that it and a copy of this response are placed in the docket.

Sincerely,

Betsy L. Wolf  
Senior Trial Attorney  
Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings

cc: Docket OST-99-6410

#:S10000128-053

PAGE #:1

01/28/2000

16:15

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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Document <b>S10-CORR NO: 51380</b> <b>CONTROL #: S10000128-053</b>	Dated <b>01/25/2000</b>	Due		
Action Office: C-1	Multi: N Writer:  <b>PATTY HANSHAW</b> OWNER/MANAGER RX TRAVEL DOCTORS <b>923 THIRD AVENUE</b> HUNTINGTON, WV <b>25701</b>			
<b>ACTION:</b>  PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS INDICATED BELOW				
<b>Subject:</b> UNFAIR PRACTICES AND UNFAIR METHODS OF COMPETITION BY AIRLINE				
ASSIGNED	DATE	REASON	DUE DATE	RETURNED
C-1	01/28/2000	FOR APPROPRIATE HANDLING		

Comments:

**SWASHING**

- 01/28/2000

**DIST: S-10**

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED INFORMATION, PLEASE ADVISE YOUR ANALYST NO LATER THAN **24 HOURS** AFTER THE RECEIPT OF THIS DOCUMENT. THIS SHEET MUST REMAIN WITH THE INCOMING DOCUMENT AND BE RETURNED WITH YOUR RESPONSE. YOUR PROMPT ACTION IS APPRECIATED. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT, **SANDY WASHINGTON, 366-9757**

SW  
1/28

# R TRAVEL & DOCTORS

*The Travel Agency, Inc.*

923 Third Avenue

Huntington, West Virginia 25701

(304) 523-3627

1-800-647-3627

Fax (304) 525-6543



The Honorable Rodney E. Slater  
~~United States~~ Secretary of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20500

January 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Simply put, I am asking you to save the travel agency business. Travel agents who provide consumers with the last, best hope for getting neutral, professional information and advice about travel service options are being forced out of business by airline unfair competition.

As you know, my association, the American Society of Travel Agents ("ASTA"), has filed a complaint against the major airlines charging them with unfair practices and unfair methods of competition in air transportation and the sale of air transportation, in violation of 49 USC. 41712. That complaint specifies, in detail, how tie airlines are destroying the travel agency business by setting agents' compensation below the cost of doing business while, at the same time, driving up agents costs with unnecessary and anti-competitive requirements.

If the airlines succeed in eliminating travel agents from the marketplace, it will be much harder for the public to learn about all of the fare and service options available to them. On the whole, this will increase the likelihood that consumers will spend more for air travel than they otherwise would.

ASTA has asked you to order the airlines to stop their unfair practices and unfair methods of competition. We do not request this relief lightly. But we know also that not granting the relief we seek will have grave consequence. At issue is whether travel agencies, which have served the public necessity and convenience since the dawn of commercial aviation, will survive in anything like their present numbers.

Through three previous reductions in compensation rates, travel agents have not before asked you to use your statutory powers to intervene directly. Now we must ask you to decide and tell us, up or down, whether there is a place for travel agencies in the future of air transportation.

Sincerely

*Patty Hanshaw, Owner/Manager*

*a full service Travel Agency*